

An essay

on

Cholera Infantum.

by

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of
Delaware.

1825.

Vol 1

1857

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Cholera Infantum

Considering the great number of Infants, who yearly fall victims, to Cholera Infantum, in the principal Cities of the United States, the medical writers of this country, have been singularly silent on the subject; and those who have ventured, hold, for the most part, very contradictory opinions, as regards its pathology, and mode of treatment.

Were but a small portion of the experience of our able practitioners, relative to the preservative, and curative, treatment, of this very terrifying disease, recorded, the young practitioners would doubtless be placed in possession of the most valuable information, and thus thousands of victims, might be snatched from an untimely grave, — But as such contributions are not to be met

with, the inexperienced, is consequently left to grope his way through a mist of theories, to the hazard of his own character, and the risk of his infantile patient.

Cholera Infantum is said to be a disease almost peculiar to the United States. Children of other countries, it is true, are liable to diseases of the alimentary canal, but we are told that none of those affections, are precisely similar to the complaint as it appears among us.

From the regular appearance of this disease in the warmest weather, it has acquired the familiar appellation, of the summer complaint, by which it is known in the principal Cities of the United States. But in Charleston South Carolina the epithet of the April, and May, disease

has been given to it, as we are told it makes its attack principally in those months. It prevails in this City (Philadelphia) from the first of July, until near the twentieth of September, though it sometimes shows itself earlier, and continues later. Children from the third or fourth week, until the second year of their age, are its usual subjects, & its violence, and danger, are in proportion to the severity of the heat, or other exciting cause. A few days warm weather, says Dr Parrish, in his lectures on this subject, will produce the disease, whilst as many cold ones will prevent the occurrence of any new cases, and mitigate the symptoms of those already produced.

The following interesting statement

made by Dr Parrish will give the mean heat and number of deaths from Cholera Infantum in this City, for several years—
 — From the latter part of May, till the latter part of August, in 1818 the mean heat was 77° the number of deaths 144—
 — in 1819 the mean heat was 78° the deaths 170. — in 1820 mean heat 78° ; deaths 202— in 1821 mean heat 77° ; deaths 138, in 1822 mean heat 77° ; deaths 173. — in 1823 mean heat 76° and deaths 206.

Although the writers on this subject, as far at least as I have had an opportunity of knowing, have considered Cholera Infantum, as a disease entirely of large Cities, and confined places, and to be cured in almost all instances by the pure, and refreshing air, of the

country, yet the good authority of some of our practitioners, compels us to believe that it frequently makes its appearance in elevated, and otherwise healthy, situations in the country, and that under these circumstances cures are effected by a removal to the City.

The most common, predisposing, cause, of this disease, is the noxious, and heated, atmosphere of large Cities, which acts by debilitating the tender infant, and opening the system to the more effectual operation of the exciting causes. Among these last, are generally reckoned, crude vegetable substances, and other injurious articles of diet, together with improper clothing.

It is also said to be brought on and aggravated, by worms, dentition, &c. &c. which may account in some degree for its ap-

pearance in the more healthy parts of the country.

The appearances upon dissection, prove that the contents of the thorax are not in the least degree affected, and that it is upon the abdominal viscera, and the brain, that the disease seems to expend its ravages. The mucous membrane of the alimentary canal, seems to be the principal seat of the disease, this being ascertained by the appearance of dark lioid spots, especially in the stomach, and duodenum. Occasionally the peritoneum, assumes the same appearance. As we would naturally suppose, the liver is most commonly considerably affected, being increased in size, soft and flabby. Sometimes it is indurated, with the gall bladder filled with bile very much altered from its natural healthy

condition. The spleen and pancreas are sometimes involved in the diseased action.

Conjoining the principal causes and symptoms of Cholera Infantum, with the appearances upon dissection, it may be clearly inferred, that it is a gastric disease, bearing a close affinity to the Cholera Morbus, from which it chiefly differs in attacking infants, whilst the latter is incident to more advanced life.

Cholera Infantum, first discovers itself, by a shrunk appearance of the cheeks, pallid countenance, and other signs of debility, which symptoms are generally soon followed, either by a diarrhea, or by a violent puking, and purging with a high fever. The matter discharged from the stomach, is generally yellow or green, whilst the stools are slimy and bloody.

without any tincture of bile. In some cases they present a curdy appearance, but in others they are nearly as limpid as water. Worms are frequently discharged in the course of the disease. Considerable pain attends the first stage, which is manifested by the patients drawing up their feet and never appearing easy, in one position.

The pulse is quick and weak. The head unusually warm, whilst the extremities retain their natural heat or incline to be cold. The accompanying fever is of the remitting kind, with its principal exacerbations towards evening. The affection of the head is sometimes so violent as to produce considerable delirium. A distressing thirst usually attends the disease. The stools which take place throughout the disease are frequently

large and fatid.

The unfavourable prognostics, are, the disease being of long duration, and attended with great emaciation, livid spots upon the skin, a swiftness of the mouth, singultus, convulsions, and finally, that peculiar and striking expression of countenance denominated *Facies Hippocratica*.

In regard to the most proper treatment of *Cholera Infantum*, there appears to be a great variety of opinion. Some allege that there is no inflammation and of course no necessity for using the lancet, or other depletory means; while on the contrary, others of equal respectability strenuously assert, that it is in all cases an inflammatory disease and to be treated in the first instance by antiphlogistic measures. Under such circumstances it is diffi-

salt for one devoid of much experience
 to see the most proper course. Without
 therefore disanting upon the comparative
 merits of either side of the question, I
 shall proceed to state the treatment I
 should be led to adopt from a view of
 the practice of those upon whose Judge-
 ment I can rely with confidence.

It is confessed by those conversant
 in the treatment of this disease, that in
 many cases unless the cause be removed,
 (which is to be done by changing a vitiated
 City, for a pure country air,) all remedies
 are utterly devoid of utility. When
 poverty or other circumstances prevent
 a visit to the country during the attack
 upon the tender frame, then it is that
 the skill of the Physician, is most ur-
 gently required.

...for the purpose of making a full and
...the most perfect manner...
...the first time that after the completion
...of either side of the building
...shall proceed to erect the structure
...shall be left to itself for a season
...the practice of this extraordinary
...and of course will not be
...of a complete of the construction
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...any case under the same is not
...to be done of which is a
...for a few years (and will be
...in a full and complete manner
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...for the first time
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...very superior

The disease being seated principally in the intestines, it would naturally appear that we should first direct our attention to the evacuation of their irritating contents, as a means of restoring them to their healthy condition.

For this purpose Castor Oil is recommended, and in mild cases it will be particularly applicable. — But where there is so great a degree of irritability of the stomach as not to retain scarcely any thing together with an elevation of pulse, with a hot dry skin, we should, as in almost all bowels complaints, of an inflammatory nature, have recourse to depletion with the lancet, ^{leeches} ~~cupping~~, &c. In conjunction with this practice, we must not neglect the warm bath, anodyne in-

The first thing that I noticed
when I stepped out of the
train was the cold air. It was
a relief after the warm
carriage. I looked around
at the people walking
towards the station.
Some were carrying
bags, others were
pulling suitcases.
I saw a man in a
top hat and a woman
in a long coat.
They were talking
to each other.
I felt a little
lost. I didn't
know where I was.
I looked at my
watch. It was
ten o'clock.
I had to go.
I walked towards
the exit.
I saw a sign
that said "Exit".
I followed it.
I walked out
of the station.
I was alone.
I felt a little
lonely.

jections, and fomentations to the epigastrium. ²When this practice has been used to the proper extent, we may have recourse to purgatives. For this purpose a variety of medicines have been highly recommended. Dr Parrish states that he has used the syrup of Rhubarb with decidedly beneficial effects. The late Dr Miller of New York has recommended, with the same intention, one sixth of a grain of Calomel, given every half hour or hour until the stools become natural. Later experience in this City affords reason to believe, that for this purpose no prescription is so decidedly advantageous, as a combination of Calomel and opium. Over other purgatives it possesses the important advantages of being insipid

small in bulk, and in consequence of its great specific gravity not liable to be rejected by vomiting. This practice though well suited to most cases is not adapted to all, for there are some in which the gastric distress is so vehement that purgatives cannot be used at all. — Such cases are distinguished by violent vomiting, thirst, quick invariable pulse, hot skin, and other febrile symptoms. Under these circumstances emetics of Ipecacuanha have been recommended. Where we have no reason to suspect the existence of inflammation this practice is highly esteemed, its effects being to determine the circulating fluids from the interior to the surface and thus restore a healthy action. If the emetic

of Ipecacuanha should not be considered a proper article for administration owing to excessive irritability of the stomach, the vomiting may be promoted by the administration of mild diluent drinks, such as ^aweak infusion of ~~Cam~~ ^{Cam} ~~xxx~~ mile flowers, tepid water &c.

The stomach being pretty well cleared of its offensive contents, we should direct our attention to the allaying the irritability of that organ, which is to be done by milk and lime water in teaspoonfull doses. For the same purpose, the spirits of Turpentine has been recommended in doses of ^{from 10 to 30} ~~from ten to thirty~~ drops according to the age of the patient; to be repeated V three or four times in the course of the day. To this treatment may be added, a blister over the region of the stomach, or

in milder cases the application of a warm poultice of hops, or, flannels wet with warm spirits will often answer the same purpose.

Should we immediately after having checked the vomiting proceed in the evacuation of the alimentary canal, I am disposed to think, that we should prostrate our little patient, already much enfeebled, so as to induce a state of debility, totally irreparable. I am therefore inclined to believe, that we should not proceed to further alimentary evacuations untill we have corroborated the system with mild diluent beverages.

Having thus prepared the stomach and system generally, we may resort to the use of Calomel and opium, and this may be persisted in, untill the bowels are thro

in which was the opportunity of the work
but for the fact of the unusual success
which it met with in the course of the
year.

There is something of a
of order in the working part of the
movement of the community and it is
difficult to think that we have the
of the feeling which was not
to be within a little of the feeling which
we have. I am therefore inclined to
believe that the whole will prove to
be the opportunity of the work and
we are now in the position of
the whole community.

There is a feeling of the whole
community and we are now in the
position of the whole community and we
are now in the position of the whole
community.

roughly cleansed, of bile or other offensive matter, for I hold those irritating accumulations to be the source of great mischief.

- In our intestinal evacuations we must proceed with caution, observing always the degree of prostration arising from such practices. When our purges seem to be too debilitating, we should omit them for an interval, and recur again to them, when the occasion may seem proper. Thus, by alternating purging, with slightly tonic remedies, we shall support our patient from the fatal effects of too great prostration.

Should the disease become chronic attended with evacuations of dark coloured offensive matter, Dr Robert Jackson has recommended, almost as a specific, a combination of charcoal,

rhubarb, and *Specacuanha*, repeated every two or three hours, as may be required. When we have pretty well evacuated the alimentary canal, we should in the next place have recourse to those medicines, which have the double effect of determining to the surface, and allaying morbid action.

For this purpose the most popular, and I presume the best, prescription, consists of *Specacuanha*, calomel, and opium, which may be mixed in such proportions as will enable them to keep the bowels loose, allay spasmodic uneasiness, and determine distinctly to the surface.

When the disease is attended with copious evacuations, together with violent pain and irritation, the proper

Blisters may be used. These should be large, and applied to the stomach, abdomen, or extremities, as circumstances may require.

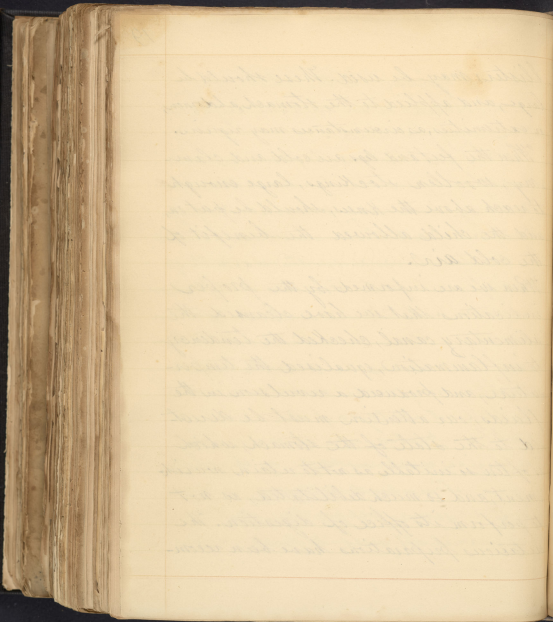
When the feet and legs are cold and clammy, woollen stockings, large enough to reach above the knees, should be put on, and the child allowed the benefit of the cold air.

When we are informed by the proper indications that we have cleared the alimentary canal, checked the tendency to inflammation, equalised the temperature, and produced a revulsion in the fluids; our attention must be directed to the state of the stomach, which is often so irritable as not to retain nourishment, and so much debilitated, as not to perform its office of digestion. The emetic preparations have been recom-

commended by most writers, for the removal of these symptoms. For the same purpose, and with similar views, the vegetable astringents, and tonics, as Columbo, the dewberry root, logwood, catechu &c have, in their turn, and justly, been highly extolled.

In those cases attended with tormina and tenesmus, with the symptoms just enumerated, viz intractability, and debility of the stomach, we may use with success in most cases a combination of Rhenubarb, magnesia and Laudanum. Anodyne injections repeated occasionally, are also highly recommended.

In the latter stages of Cholera Infantum, after the acute symptoms have subsided, a profuse diarrhoea



almost always attends, and demands our attention. For the checking of this discharge numerous medicines have been employed, among which, are alum, saccharum saturni, columbo, chalk, infusion of galls, and tincture of kino.

A very favourite prescription with Doctor Physick, is the logwood, in infusion, giving a desert spoonfull every two or three hours.

Dr Chapman, in his lectures, speaks very highly of a strong decoction of the devil-living root of our country. This article he has used for several years, and with very beneficial effects. He describes it as the most effectual astringent, in this disease, with which he is acquainted, resting easily on the stomach, and producing a cure in many cases by

a few doses. He further states that after a short use, laxatives are, sometimes required for the purpose of overcoming constipation. Of a decoction made by adding a pint of boiling water to one ounce of the bruised root, the ordinary dose is a desert spoonful, repeated according to circumstances.

About this period of the disease, should there be great prostration, with aphthæ of the mouth, medicines which have a tendency to corroborate the system should be used as lime water and bark, or the bark jacket; scalded lemon juice, given cold, has also been recommended as an efficient remedy. Rinsing the mouth with a solution of sub borate of soda, will in most cases remove the aphthæ.

During convalescence the patient should

be gratified, in any kind of food the appetite may crave; for it has been observed, that, in this state of the disease, when the child has been supplied with those nourishments, which it seems particularly to desire, its recovery was very much accelerated. A desire for salt meats is always a most favourable indication, and the patient should never be debarred from any kind whatever.

The diet if not contra-indicated, by the signs of the patient, should generally consist of soups, beef-tea, and the essence of beef. Milk punch is also very good.

He should walk, or ride, a short distance beyond the outskirts of the city at least once a day, and should lodge in the most elevated and best ventilated apartment in the house.

His clothing should consist of flannel, properly adjusted, and kept clean.

A flannel roller around the abdomen acts, in this, as well as in almost all, febrile complaints, as a beneficial agent.

It possesses the advantage of being suited to all stages of the disease.

I have now laid down the curative plan of treatment in Cholera Infantum, to the best of my abilities, and it is intended for those only, who, from poverty, or other circumstances, cannot receive the benefits of a country residence. For the high the practice is, in most cases, comparatively trifling, scarcely any thing being necessary, more than to lance the gums and send the patient to the country.

I must here beg leave to remark

that, lancing the gums, in the early stages of this disease, whether tumid or not, is a most judicious practice; and if there be sores behind the ears, instead of healing them they should be kept open. If there be no sores blisters should be applied to produce them, which, by concentrating the irritation in the skin relieves the stomach and bowels.

As preventives are always more desirable than curatives it may be well, for this purpose to mention, that those who may be considered subject to Cholera Infantum should, —

1st Reside during the day, and lodge at night on a mattrass in the most airy and elevated apartment.

2nd They should use the cold bath daily, a practice which not only tends to cleanliness, but by its shock upon the sys-

tem, preserves undisturbed the relation between the skin and alimentary canal.

The plunging bath is the best, and the patient should recover from the first shock, before he is subjected to the second.

Good attention should be paid to the dress of children, which should be adapted to the state and changes of the atmosphere. Flannel, next the skin, makes the best dress.

4th The diet should be particularly attended to. If the child has not been weaned, (and weaning it is thought predisposes to Cholera,) the mother's milk is its best nourishment. For the first few months, after the child may have been weaned, the most proper food is milk, and some of the pure farinaceous vegetables, as arrow root, tapioca, or

boisewit victuals, made by boiling
pounded crackers in milk. Salt meat,
and salt fish, are also considered very
serviceable.

5th During dentition, a strict atten-
tion should be paid to the state of the
gums, and if found tumid, or inflamed
lancing will be necessary.

6th Removal to the country is al-
ways of primary importance.

Fredericksburg

Virginia

